

- c. First Steps early intervention services for which an individual child may be eligible are determined by a multidisciplinary team through a process that results in an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) describing the services that are authorized for the eligible child and the child's family. The definition of an IFSP can be found in the Missouri State Regulations for Implementing Part C of IDEA.
- d. Funding – First Steps early intervention services are supported through the following funding sources:
  - 1) Local Revenue
  - 2) Family Participation Fees
  - 3) Private Health Insurance
  - 4) Medicaid/MC+
  - 5) State funds for First Steps
  - 6) Federal Part C funds (as payer of last resort)

1.3.2 First Steps System Structure – In the last several years, Missouri First Steps has evolved into a statewide system including the components listed below. Additionally, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is implementing a number of changes to the infrastructure and operating procedures for First Steps from what currently exists within the regions. These changes are based on experience gained through previous implementation models and requirements outlined in recently enacted state legislation (SB 500; Section. 160.900 – 160.925 RSMo, viewable the internet at: [http://www.senate.mo.gov/05info/BTS\\_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=21806](http://www.senate.mo.gov/05info/BTS_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=21806)). Many of the significant changes are identified below:

- a. *State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC)* – Federal regulations implementing Part C of IDEA require a State Interagency Coordinating Council to advise and assist the state agency in their responsibilities for the First Steps System. For more information about the SICC, refer to the Missouri State Regulations for Implementing Part C of IDEA
- b. *Regional Interagency Coordinating Councils (RICC) and Local Interagency Coordinating Councils (LICC)* – A Regional Interagency Coordinating Council (RICC) exists within SPOE regions 1, 2 and 4, and will be developed in the other regions to assist the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the SPOE with the evaluation of the effectiveness of the First Steps system in the region. Local Interagency Coordinating Councils (LICC) also exist, and may continue to exist if desired by the LICC, to address county level issues associated with early intervention services. Activities for these groups include the evaluation of the effectiveness of the following:
  - 1) Administrative SPOE operations within the region
  - 2) Services to children and families
  - 3) Child find
  - 4) Provider recruitment
- c. *Regional First Steps Consultants* – Four (4) regional consultants provide technical assistance to SPOE offices in the areas of Child Find, Provider Recruitment, marketing, operations and compliance. The consultants maintain regular interaction with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in order to coordinate communication between the Department and the SPOE region.
- d. *Central Finance Office (CFO)* - The State of Missouri contracts with a central finance office via Contract Number C203040001 to perform responsibilities listed below.
  - 1) *Provider Matrix - First Steps Provider Enrollment System* – The CFO enrolls First Steps service providers who meet the criteria identified in the Missouri State Regulations for Implementing



Part C of IDEA and develops and maintains a list of all service providers authorized to provide the various First Steps activities and services. This list of authorized First Steps service providers is referred to as the *provider matrix*.

- 2) **Fiscal Management** – The CFO issues authorizations for services to First Step service providers, processes the authorizations and pays the providers, and seeks reimbursement for services from applicable funding sources on an individual child basis.

PARAGRAPH MODIFIED VIA AMENDMENT #001

- **Authorizations for Travel** – One of the changes being made regarding fiscal management is that if circumstances require an early intervention service provider (including those service providers on the evaluation/assessment team) to travel more than sixty (60) miles (one-way) to provide services, a travel payment can now be paid by the CFO if properly authorized.

PARAGRAPH ADDED VIA AMENDMENT #001

- **Payments for Travel** – If an authorization for a travel payment is properly entered in the system, travel will be paid by the CFO to providers at a fixed rate that may be adjusted annually. Currently the fixed rate is \$45.00 for at least a 120 mile round trip authorized for 60 or more miles one way. The fixed amount is per trip, even if the trip exceeds 120 miles.
- 3) **Child Data System Design and Management** – The CFO maintains the child data software ensuring that specific child data is available to local and state planners for compliance monitoring, financial forecasting, and budgeting purposes. The child data software is fully HIPAA compliant. As specified in this RFP, the SPOE has requirements related to entering information into the child data system.
- e. **System Points of Entry (SPOE)** – Regional contracts for SPOEs exist statewide for all children referred to the First Steps System. The SPOEs are responsible for facilitating the referral, eligibility, and service coordination for the child and family. In addition, each SPOE is required to maintain early intervention records and enter data into the child data system stored at the CFO. Information about the existing SPOE contracts is included later in this section and in Attachment 1. The responsibilities of the SPOE have evolved and changed over the last several years. See the Contractual Requirements Section of this RFP for specific requirements. However, a couple of the key changes include:
- 1) **The SPOE has increased and more defined over-all administrative responsibility for activities necessary to operate the First Steps System at a regional level.**
    - The SPOE has responsibility to ensure that needed early intervention services are available and accessible throughout the region and if not, to either employ or otherwise contract for the needed services and to ensure that the service providers are enrolled in the provider matrix through the CFO.
    - Also included is the responsibility for the selection of early intervention service providers and oversight and evaluation of the service providers.
  - 2) **Because the SPOE can now employ early intervention service providers, as geographic necessity dictates, there is no longer a requirement that the SPOE administrative office can not be located in a facility where other First Step Early Intervention Services are provided.**
  - 3) **The geographic area of the SPOE region was adjusted to gain efficiency of operation, a reduced number of SPOE administrative offices, and closer alignment with the**



**Department of Mental Health (DMH) Regional Centers.** (It is understood that there may be significant differences in the demographics of individual counties; however, all counties must be served within the defined First Steps regions and all services required by Part C of IDEA must be available as needed.)

- f. *Service Coordination* – Service coordination is defined by Missouri State Regulations for Implementing Part C of IDEA as, "...the activities carried out by a service coordinator to assist and enable an eligible child and the child's family to receive the rights, procedural safeguards and services that are authorized to be provided under the State's early intervention program." Service Coordinators provide the vital link between families, service providers and SPOE administration as well as monitoring the provision of direct services.

- 1) Service Coordination is provided by SPOE employed service coordinators in the Greater St. Louis SPOE (region 1), St. Louis County SPOE (region 2) and the Northwest SPOE (region 4). The remaining regions included in this RFP, who have been providing ongoing service coordination through independent service coordinators enrolled on the First Steps Provider Matrix, are now being changed to ongoing service coordination being provided by SPOE employed service coordinators. **Service coordination by independent service coordinators will no longer be used.** (See Contractual Requirements of this RFP).

PARAGRAPH MODIFIED VIA AMENDMENT #001

- 2) A state interagency agreement between the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) provides for DMH to provide service coordination consisting of just on-going services for 40% of the eligible children within each region. A copy of the interagency agreement can be found on the internet at:

<http://www.dese.mo.gov/divspeced/FirstSteps/pdfs/DMHInteragrmnt0305.pdf>

SPOEs will provide sixty percent (60%) of the service coordination function and the remaining forty percent (40%) within the region will be provided by the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) through the DMH regional centers. The Department of Mental Health's forty (40%) of service coordination services currently equates to approximately 1800 children in the State of Missouri.

- 3) The DMH service coordinators will continue to be enrolled through the First Steps Provider Enrollment System managed by the CFO. DMH service coordinators will be responsible for coordinating and managing the First Steps early intervention service delivery to children and families assigned to DMH service coordination by the SPOE office.

- 1.3.3 Compliance Monitoring - In addition to the services described above, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is required by federal regulations to conduct compliance monitoring of the First Steps System. Specific information about such requirements and about the Missouri First Steps System can be found on the internet at:

[http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/Compliance/MSIP\\_Monitoring/index.html](http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/Compliance/MSIP_Monitoring/index.html)

- 1.3.4 Existing Contracts:

- a. First Step System Point of Entry (SPOE) services for the counties included in this RFP have previously been contracted through the nine (9) contracts listed in Attachment 1. The nine contracts in Attachment 1 are being rebid via this RFP. However, the requirements of this RFP are different than the requirements for the previous contracts. In addition, the regions for this RFP are different than the regions from the previous contracts (see Attachment 1 and Attachment 6).
- b. In addition to the System Point of Entry (SPOE) contracts being rebid as a result of this RFP, in State Fiscal Year 2004, another RFP (B3Z04176) was issued for SPOE services in the Greater St.

Louis, St. Louis County and Northwest regions of the State of Missouri. A list of the awarded SPOE contracts is provided below. These contracts will remain in effect at this time.

Region #	Contract #	Contractor Name
1	C304176001	Child Day Care Association
2	C304176002	Special School District
4	C304176003	The Daulton Group

- c. Any of the contracts listed in this background information herein can be viewed and printed from the Division of Purchasing and Materials Management's **Public Record Search and Retrieval System** located on the Internet at: <http://www.oa.mo.gov/purch/purch.htm>. In addition, all proposal and evaluation documentation leading to the award of the expiring/expired contract may also be viewed and printed from the Division of Purchasing and Materials Management's **Public Record Search and Retrieval System**. Please reference the Bid number or the contract number when searching for these documents.

- 1.3.5 Although an attempt has been made to provide accurate and up-to-date information, the State of Missouri does not warrant or represent that the background information provided herein reflects all relationships or existing conditions related to this Request for Proposal.